

Well Decommissioning

PRACTICE INTRODUCTION

USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service - practice code 351



DEFINITION

Well Decommissioning is sealing and permanently closing a water well that is no longer in use.

PRACTICE INFORMATION

This practice applies to any drilled, dug, driven, bored, or otherwise constructed vertical water well determined to have no further beneficial use.

The practice serves to:

- Prevent entry of vermin, debris, or other foreign substances into the well or well bore hole.
- Eliminate the physical hazard of an open hole to people, animals, and machinery.
- Prevent entry of contaminated surface water into a well and migration of

contaminants into unsaturated (vadose) zone or saturated zone.

- Prevent the commingling of chemically or physically different ground waters between separate water bearing zones.

This practice is not used when evidence of contamination exists, or when the well contains contaminate levels that exceed state or federal quality standards. Prior to decommissioning a contaminated well, treatment of the contamination source (s) is required as well as monitoring the groundwater to assure quality standards are met.

Additional information including design criteria and specifications are in the local NRCS Field Office Technical Guide.